

Hájí Mírzá Hasan, the Afnán

Among the most eminent of those who left their homeland to join Bahá'u'lláh was Mírzá Hasan, the great Afnán, who during the latter days won the honor of emigrating and of receiving the favor and companionship of his Lord. The Afnán, related to the Báb, was specifically named by the Supreme Pen as an offshoot of the Holy Tree. When still a small child, he received his portion of bounty from the Báb, and showed forth an extraordinary attachment to that dazzling Beauty. Not yet adolescent, he frequented the society of the learned, and began to study sciences and arts. He reflected day and night on the most abstruse of spiritual questions, and gazed in wonderment at the mighty signs of God as written in the Book of Life. He became thoroughly versed even in such material sciences as mathematics, geometry, and geography; in brief, he was well grounded in many fields, thoroughly conversant with the thought of ancient and modern times.

A merchant by profession, he spent only a short period of the day and evening at his business, devoting most of his time to discussion and research. He was truly erudite, a great credit to the Cause of God amongst leading men of learning. With a few concise phrases, he could solve perplexing questions. His speech was laconic, but in itself a kind of miracle.

Although he first became a believer in the days of the Báb, it was during the days of Bahá'u'lláh that he caught fire. Then his love of God burned away every obstructing veil and idle thought. He did all he could to spread the Faith of God, becoming known far and wide for his ardent love of Bahá'u'lláh.

I am lost, O Love, possessed and dazed,
Love's fool am I, in all the earth.
They call me first among the crazed,
Though I once came first for wit and worth...

After the ascension of the Báb, he had the high honor of serving and watching over the revered and saintly consort of the blessed Lord. He was in Persia, mourning his separation from Bahá'u'lláh, when his distinguished son became, by marriage, a member of the Holy Household. At this, the Afnán rejoiced. He left Persia and hastened to the sheltering favor of his Well-Beloved. He was a man amazing to behold, his face so luminous that even those who were not believers used to say that a heavenly light shone from his forehead.

He went away for a time and sojourned in Beirut, where he met the noted scholar, Khájih Findík. This personage warmly praised the erudition of the great Afnán in various circles, affirming that an individual of such wide and diverse learning was rare throughout the East. Later on, the Afnán returned to the Holy Land, settling near the Mansion of Bahjí and directing all his thoughts toward aspects of human culture. Much of the time he would occupy himself with uncovering the secrets of the heavens, contemplating in their detail the movements of the stars. He had a telescope with which he would make his observations every night. He lived a happy life, carefree and light of heart. In the neighborhood of Bahá'u'lláh his days were blissful, his nights bright as the first morning in spring.

But then came the Beloved's departure from this world. The Afnán's peace was shattered, his joy was changed to grief. The Supreme Affliction was upon us, separation consumed us, the once bright days turned black as night, and all those roses of other hours were dust and rubble now. He lived on for a little while, his heart smoldering, his eyes

shedding their tears. But he could not bear the longing for his Well-Beloved, and in a little while his soul gave up this life and fled to the eternal one; passed into the Heaven of abiding reunion and was immersed beneath an ocean of light. Upon him be most great mercy, plenteous bounty, and every blessing, as the ages and cycles roll on. His honored tomb is in Akká at the Manshíyyih.